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Groups of countries in special situations: follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. Tauhedul Islam (Bangladesh), on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.10

Smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul, Turkey, from 9 to 13 May 2011, in which Member States committed to assisting the least developed countries with an overarching goal of enabling half of them to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020,

Taking into account its resolution 59/209 of 20 December 2004 on a smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

Recalling its resolution 66/213 of 22 December 2011, in which it requested the President of the General Assembly to establish an ad hoc working group to further study and strengthen the smooth transition process for the countries graduating from the least developed country category and to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session with specific recommendations, consistent with the Istanbul Programme of Action,

Recalling also its resolution 65/286 of 29 June 2011 on implementing the smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries,

[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

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Recalling further Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/32 of 27 July 2012 on the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its fourteenth session,

Emphasizing that graduation from the list of least developed countries is a major milestone for the country involved, as it means that significant progress has been made towards reaching at least some of its development goals,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group to further study and strengthen the smooth transition process for the countries graduating from the least developed country category;[3]

2. *Also takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[4] especially section III on progress towards graduation and smooth transition;

3. *Reiterates* the importance of ensuring that the graduation of a country from least developed country status does not cause disruption in the development progress which that country has achieved, and in this regard recognizes that the graduation process of least developed countries should include consideration of appropriate incentives and support measures;

4. *Urges* graduating countries and all bilateral and multilateral development and trading partners to pursue or intensify their efforts, consistent with the rules of the World Trade Organization, to contribute to the full implementation of resolution 59/209 of 20 December 2004, as appropriate, with a view to ensuring the smooth transition of graduating least developed countries;

5. *Recognizes* the importance of making available information about least developed country-specific support measures and related smooth transition measures, in the areas of financial support, technical assistance and trade-related measures, including their time frames, characteristics and modalities;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to further enhance information-sharing and understanding of available least developed country-specific international support measures, their characteristics and modalities, commends, in this regard, the existence of the Support Measures Portal for Least Developed Countries, which was developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat as a valuable comprehensive tool for online information-sharing, and encourages its continuous updating and improvement;

7. *Emphasizes* that a successful transition needs to be based on the national smooth transition strategy elaborated as a priority by each graduating country, during the period between the date the recommendation that the country be graduated is taken note of by the General Assembly and the effective graduation date, under national leadership, involving, as appropriate, all stakeholders of the Istanbul Programme of Action[2] and the support of the international community, and that the national smooth transition strategy should include a comprehensive and coherent set of specific and predictable measures that are in accordance with the

[3] A/67/92.

[4] A/67/88-E/2012/75 and Corr.1.

priorities of the graduating country, while taking into account its own specific structural challenges and vulnerabilities as well as its strengths;

8. *Recommends* that the consultative mechanism, specified in resolution 59/209, be established by the graduating country, in cooperation with its bilateral and multilateral development and trading partners, to facilitate the preparation of the transition strategy, the identification of the associated actions and the negotiation of their duration and phasing out for a period appropriate to the development situation of the country, and that it be integrated with other relevant consultative processes and initiatives between the graduating country and its development partners;

9. *Reiterates its call upon* development and trading partners of graduating countries to make efforts so that their bilateral and multilateral strategies and aid programmes support the national transition strategy of the respective country;

10. *Decides* to take note of the decisions of the Economic and Social Council regarding the graduation of countries from the list of least developed countries, as well as the inclusion of countries in that list, at the first session of the General Assembly following the adoption of such decisions by the Council;

11. *Invites* graduating and graduated countries to implement the smooth transition strategy as part of their overall development strategy and to incorporate it into relevant documents, including the poverty reduction strategy papers and the action matrix of the Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies under the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries;

12. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, as Chair of the United Nations Development Group, to provide, if requested, the support of the Resident Coordinator as a facilitator of the consultative process, and to assist graduating countries in the preparation of their transition strategies;

13. *Requests* the entities of the United Nations system to provide targeted assistance, including capacity-building, to graduating countries, if requested, through the United Nations country teams, in line with the existing mandates and resources, in support of the formulation and implementation of the national transition strategy;

14. *Invites* United Nations entities that have committed to allocating a certain percentage of their resources to least developed countries to consider the extension and gradual phasing-out of least developed country-specific support to graduated countries for a fixed period of time, in a predictable manner, and applied according to the specific development situation of each graduating country;

15. *Invites* development and trading partners to consider the inclusion of trade-related technical assistance as part of the commitments to support each country's transition strategy in order to help graduating countries to adjust to the phasing-out of trade preferences, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework, Aid for Trade or other instruments;

16. *Reiterates* its invitation to all members of the World Trade Organization to consider extending to graduated countries the existing special and differential treatment measures and exemptions available to least developed countries for a period appropriate to the development situation of the country;

17. *Invites* trading partners that have not established procedures for extending or phasing out preferential market access, inter alia, duty-free and quota-free treatment, to clarify in a predictable manner, as a general measure or at the consultative mechanism, their position with regard to the extension of the least developed country-specific preferences, the number of years of the extension or the details concerning the gradual phasing-out of the measures;

18. *Invites* least developed country-specific funds of the United Nations system to continue providing technical assistance to graduated countries in a phased out manner over a limited period of time, and as appropriate to the development situation of the country, from within existing resources;

19. *Encourages* organizations of the United Nations system to extend voluntary travel benefits to graduated countries for a period appropriate to the development situation of the country from within existing resources and for a maximum of three years from the date of graduation;

20. *Invites* the Governments of graduating countries, with the support of the consultative mechanism, to report annually to the Committee for Development Policy on the preparation of the transition strategy and, after graduation becomes effective, to provide concise annual reports on the implementation of the smooth transition strategy for a period of three years, and triennially thereafter, as a complement to the two triennial reviews of the list of least developed countries carried out by the Committee for Development Policy;

21. *Requests* the Committee for Development Policy to monitor the development progress of graduated countries, in consultation with the Governments of those countries, on a yearly basis for a period of three years after graduation becomes effective and triennially thereafter, as a complement to two triennial reviews of the list of the least developed countries, and to include its findings in its annual report to the Economic and Social Council;

22. *Encourages* least developed countries to interact with graduated countries in order to obtain information on, discuss their experiences and share lessons learned in the context of graduation with support from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;

23. *Invites* development partners to consider least developed country indicators, gross national income per capita, the human assets index and the economic vulnerability index as part of their criteria for allocating official development assistance;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a progress report on the implementation, the effectiveness and the added value of smooth transition measures, including initiatives taken by the United Nations system to support countries during their graduation from the least developed country category.